

Eliot Spitzer, New York State Attorney General
Campaign Headquarters
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RE: NEW YORK REGIONAL INTERCONNECT

06/27/2006

Dear Mr. Spitzer:

Please use your voice and your candidacy for governor to help stop New York Regional Interconnect (NYRI) from building its proposed 200-mile-long electric transmission line in Upstate New York.

New York State has energy issues to tackle. But NYRI is not a solution. It is a problem. NYRI is a devious, secretive, untrustworthy Russian doll of holding companies. The company has treated the public, legislators and New York State law with contempt: (1.) by misinforming the public out of guile or incompetence; (2.) by forcing the State Senate to hold special hearings and Senator Schumer to publicly demand that the company address questions they have thus far refused to answer; and (3.) by submitting an NYSPSC Article VII application filled with holes (most notably proper economic and environmental impact studies) and requests for waivers.

NYRI plans to overstep the NYSPSC review process by appealing to the DOE for NIETC status and then taking their case directly to FERC. They want to railroad their project using connections and cronyism. We've seen over and over that companies run this way do not save the public money. If the project is approved and NYRI is granted the right of eminent domain by the state or the federal government, it will cost everybody money—if not in electrical costs then in trial fees.

NYRI says it will solve the energy needs of New York City, Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley, all of which it claims will be “pushed beyond acceptable standards of reliability by 2008.” This is simply untrue. Long Island’s energy needs are already being addressed by the Neptune Regional Transmission System project, which is underway and will be completed in 2007. Meanwhile, a recent Con Edison report states that additional resources for New York City won’t be needed until at least 2012, and perhaps as late as 2014. This means “we can plan for our future needs in a thoughtful way,” says Gil C. Quiniones, a senior vice president of the Economic Development Corporation and chairman of the New York City Energy Policy Task Force. Surely, there are smaller, less dramatic, and probably less expensive changes—including upgrades and redesigns of the grid—that can address the remaining areas of congestion.

NYRI’s proposal to cure downstate’s many energy problems by replicating the overcentralized, over-juiced structures that created those problems is overkill. In fact, according to a 1996 U.S. Department of Energy report: “The option to increase transmission capacity by upgrading the existing lines is of interest because it can be done at considerably less cost than constructing a new transmission line and with a shorter lead time. Constructing new transmission lines is becoming more difficult with environmental concerns, potential health effects of EMFs (electromagnetic fields), and possibly declining property values over transmission line routes.”

There is no sound justification for allowing this profiteering foreign-owned company to devastate the environment, health, beauty and already fragile economies of more than 70 towns, from Marcy in Oneida County to New Windsor in Orange County.

NYRI is the wrong company, with the wrong project, in the wrong place. Please take action to stop it.

Sincerely,

John Doe
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